



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Stephen P. Sinnott, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Ritchie E. Bufford, Madison, DOB: 03/12/1981, was sentenced today by Chief U.S. District Court Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 37 months in prison, without parole, for unlawfully possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. Bufford pleaded guilty to this charge on April 4, 2005.

Bufford, who had been convicted of felony drug distribution in 1999, led officers with the Town of Madison Police Department on a high speed chase during the early morning hours of February 7, 2005, after the officers tried to make a traffic stop. The car Bufford was driving eventually came to a stop after hitting a basketball pole. Bufford abandoned the car and fled on foot, leaving a fully loaded handgun magazine in the car. A canine tracked Bufford's scent, and he was arrested.

During the high speed chase officers had observed Bufford veer suddenly into the right lane of the Beltline, and after Bufford was in custody officers searched that area of the Beltline for any items Bufford may have discarded. Officers located a Taurus 9 mm pistol, with the magazine missing. One round of ammunition was in the chamber of the pistol and that ammunition was the same brand as that located in the magazine in Bufford's car.

The charge against Bufford was the result of an investigation conducted by the Town of Madison Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rita M. Rumbelow.

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